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ABSTRACT

Each year more children come to school unprepared to relate appropriately to others and to contribute to a positive school climate. These children seem to have more problems and less ability to cope with the structural environment of the school. Educators tend to agree that many children lack the character traits necessary for healthy, positive growth and development. Many factors contribute to this situation. Family mobility separates people from their extended families; children spend a limited amount of time with their parents or other influential family members; and children often view inappropriately portrayed behaviors on television and in the movies. Schools have identified character education as part of the solution. This book offers character education activities for the classroom than can be integrated into the school day. It presents 52 activities that can be included in social studies, health, and language arts lessons. The activities are designed for counselors, social workers, and other student services personnel to use when working with individuals, small groups, and classroom guidance. Activities focus on responsibility, good citizenship, compassion, cooperation, and character formation. (Contains 7 references.) (JDM)

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Character Education for K-6 Classrooms

by Sandra Peyser
and
Miriam McLaughlin

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by Sandra Peyser
and
Miriam McLaughlin

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4

Dedication

To Sh[illegible], David, and Jay; the characters in my life

SLP

To Charlie, Lauren, Sarah, Becky, and Hassimi; all people of great character

MM

About the Authors

Miriam McLaughlin is an independent writer and training consultant. She is a state and national trainer for Student Service initiatives and issues related to the at-risk student population. Mrs. McLaughlin is the author of numerous educational articles, coauthor of the nationally acclaimed parent training manual, *D.A.R.E. to Parent,* and coauthor of *Warm Ups and Wind Downs, Peer Listening in the Middle School, TLC•Tutoring•Leading•Cooperating: Training Activities for Elementary School Students, The Race for Safe Schools,* and *ADDICTION: The High that Brings You Down.* Mrs. McLaughlin is a native of Massachusetts. She currently resides in Fuquay Varina, North Carolina.

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Table of Contents

About the Authors 4
Traits to be Explored in This Book 8
Introduction 9
1 CHILDREN should learn to be: industrious, hard-working, ambitious... ..... **11**
Activity 1 Builders at Work 12
Activity 2 Fairytales 13
Activity 3 Lots of Red Hens 14
Activity 4 It's Me at Work 16
It's Me 17
Activity 5 How Can You Tell? 18
Work Sheet 19
Practicing Working Hard 20
Activity 6 High Goals 21
Understanding and Reflection 22
2 CHILDREN should learn to be: open-minded, courteous, tolerant, accepting, polite, broadminded... ..... **23**
Activity 7 What's Cooking? 24
Activity 8 Please and Thank You 25
Activity 9 Simple Acts of Kindness 26
Activity 10 Everybody's Doing It 27
Courteous Words 28
Practicing Courtesy 29
Activity 11 Come and Get Me 30
Activity 12 New and Different 32
Activity 13 Body Talk 33
Activity 14 It's in Code 34
Decoded Sentences 35
\øode Sheet 36
Understanding and Reflection 37
3 CHILDREN should learn to be: responsible, accountable, honest, trustworthy, loyal, reliable, dependable... ..... **39**
Activity 14 Where is Puffy? 38
The Story of Puffy 39

Activity 16	Who's Responsible?	44
Activity 17	Get a Job	45
	Job List	46
	Practicing Responsibility	47
Activity 18	What If?	48
	What if...:	49
Activity 19	Stop and Go	50
	Situations	51
Activity 20	Honest People	52
	Honest People	53
Activity 21	Buy! Buy! Buy!	54
	Commercial Report Form	55
Activity 22	How Good is Your Word?	56
	Problems and Solutions	57
Activity 23	Funny Papers	59
Activity 24	Loyalty in History	60
	Suggestions for Biographies	60
Activity 25	People You Count On	61
Activity 26	Newspaper Walk	62
	Understanding and Reflection	64
4 CHILDREN should learn to be: protective of the environment, law-abiding, patriotic, good citizens...		**65**
Activity 27	A World of Flowers	66
	Being Protective of the Environment	67
Activity 28	Playing by the Rules	68
	School Safety Rules and Consequences	69
Activity 29	Law Makers	70
	Lands	70
Activity 30	Let's Take a Commercial Break	72
Activity 31	Future Citizen	73
	Understanding and Reflection	74
5 CHILDREN should learn to be: good sports, courageous, brave...		**75**
Activity 32	What a Good Sport	76
Activity 33	The Big Game	77
	The Big Game Story	78
	Phrase List	80
	Practicing Sportsmanship	81

8

Activity 34 Two Circles 82
Activity 35 What is Courage? 84
Situations 85
Understanding and Reflection 86
6 CHILDREN should learn to be: considerate, caring, friendly, compassionate... 87
Activity 36 Too Close for Comfort 88
Activity 37 Sort of Scrabble 90
Activity 38 Thinking of You 91
Activity 39 Smile 92
Practicing Friendliness 93
Activity 40 Samuel's Walk 94
Samuel's Walk 95
Understanding and Reflection 97
7 CHILDREN should be... well mannered, thrifty, neat, clean, respectful... 99
Activity 41 Polite Conversation 100
Activity 42 Bumbling Boris 101
The Story of Bumbling Boris 102
Activity 43 Save or Spend? 104
Budget Sheet 106
Activity 44 Spending Spree 107
Activity 45 What a Mess 108
Andre 109
Activity 46 The Story of Lucy McCrory 110
The Story of Lucy McCory 111
Activity 47 What is Respect? 112
Respect Work Sheet 113
Activity 48 Different and the Same 115
Statement List 116
Understanding and Reflection 117
8 Culminating Activities 119
Activity 49 Building Character 120
Activity 50 Family Values 121
Interview Form 122
Character Education: 25 Suggestions for Parents 123
Bibliography 127

Traits to be Explored in This Book

1. Industrious, hard-working, ambitious

2. Open-minded, courteous, tolerant, accepting, polite, broadminded

3. Responsible, accountable, honest, trustworthy, loyal, reliable, dependable

4. Protective of the environment, law-abiding, patriotic, good citizen

5. Good sportsmanship, courageous, brave

6. Considerate, caring, friendly, compassionate

7. Clean, neat, thrifty, well-mannered, respectful

Introduction

Most educators agree that more children come to school each year unprepared to relate appropriately to others or contribute to a positive school climate. These children seem to have more problems and less ability to cope with the structured environment of the school.

Schools are seeing a steady increase in violence, with some classrooms becoming battle grounds. There has been a marked increase in the number of young people involved in criminal activity in the communities and a steady decrease in the age of first involvement.

It is the general consensus among educators that many children lack the character traits necessary for healthy, positive growth and development. Some are ill-mannered and lack respect for others; some are irresponsible or unkind to their peers.

Researchers, and others interested in the causes, point to the mobility that separates people from their extended families, the limited amount of time children spend with parents or other influential family members, and the portrayal of inappropriate behavior on television and in movies.

Whatever the causes, schools have identified character education as part of the solution. This book, for elementary and middle school children, offers character education activities for the classroom that can be integrated into the school day.

Social Studies, Health, and Language Arts are three curriculum areas that can readily include character education. Counselors, social workers, and other student services personnel can also use these activities with small groups, classroom guidance, and in individual sessions. These activities are excellent training tools for peer helper, Students Against Violence Everywhere, DARE, and other affective education programs.

Along with parents, educators have a powerful influence on the children they see every day. We encourage you to model the traits you are teaching and to include parents by letting them know what their children are studying. Give parents suggestions for reinforcing these traits at home or have students model them for their parents as part of their homework.

The more people involved in teaching these traits, the greater the impact on young people. Character education is everyone's job—families, schools, religious organizations and communities. At the end of this book you will find suggestions for parents to help in the schools' efforts. We must work together to ensure that our children grow into productive, contributing adults.

Good Luck,

Sandy and Miriam

1

CHILDREN should learn to be:
industrious, hard-working, ambitious...

13

Activity 1
Builders at Work

Trait:

Industriousness

Time:

15 to 25 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Small slips of paper with the names of the buildings noted below written on them.

school	fire station	apartment house
bank	restaurant	department store
barn	parking garage	church/synagogue

To Begin:

Instruct your students to form small groups. Distribute the slips of paper with the names of buildings on them—one to each group. Ask your students to keep the name of their building secret from the other groups.

Explain to your students that they are to use their bodies to build their buildings. Tell the groups they may make noises and use movement, but they cannot speak. Allow five to six minutes for the groups to work. All group members must participate.

Ask each group to "perform" and other groups to guess what building the performers have built.

Applaud all efforts.

To End:

Discuss the following:

a. What would happen if one or two people acted tired or silly when they were playing their part of the building?

b. What happens to your school work when you don't give it your best effort?

Activity 2
Fairytales

Trait:

Industriousness

Time:

30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

One copy of the story of the *Three Little Pigs,* paper, and pencils

To Begin:

Read the story of the *Three Little Pigs* aloud to your students. (The students are probably very familiar with it, but they may not remember the details).

Ask your students to rewrite the story in their own words, explaining why one pig was more industrious than the others.

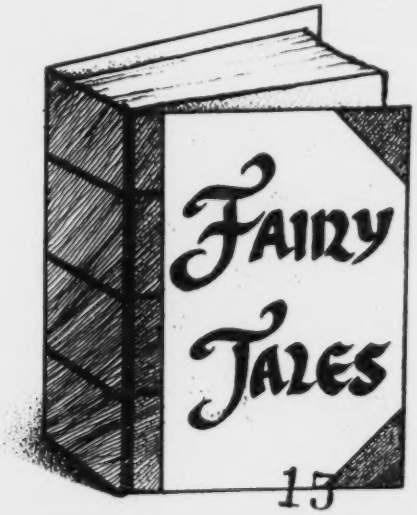
Invite several volunteers to read their stories to the class.

To End:

Discuss the following:

a. How did the third little pig's industriousness help others?

b. Why is industriousness a good trait to have?



Activity 3
Lots of Red Hens

Trait:

Industriousness

Time:

45 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Story, *The Little Red Hen*

To Begin:

Remind your students of the story of *The Little Red Hen* who worked hard to make bread all by herself, or read the story aloud.

Explain how, in much of the work we do today, we must depend on others to do their jobs so that we can do ours.

Tell them that unlike the little red hen, our society has different groups of people to do the things necessary to make bread.

Divide your students into five groups, one for each of the following job categories: farmers, millers, truck drivers, bakers, and grocery clerks. Have the groups form one long line across the room, beginning with the farmers, followed by the millers, bakers, truck drivers and grocery clerks.

Explain that each group will act out their job, one group at a time. The farmers should pretend to plant and harvest the grain, the millers should pretend to grind the grain into flour, the bakers should pretend to make the bread, and the truck drivers pretend to drive the bread from the bakers to the store where the clerks sell it.

Have the students do their assigned work down the line twice. Then ask all the millers to sit down. Start the process again. Note that the bakers cannot make bread if the grain has not been ground to flour. The truck drivers have no bread to deliver to the stores and the store clerks have no bread to sell.

Repeat the activity, asking a different group to sit down.

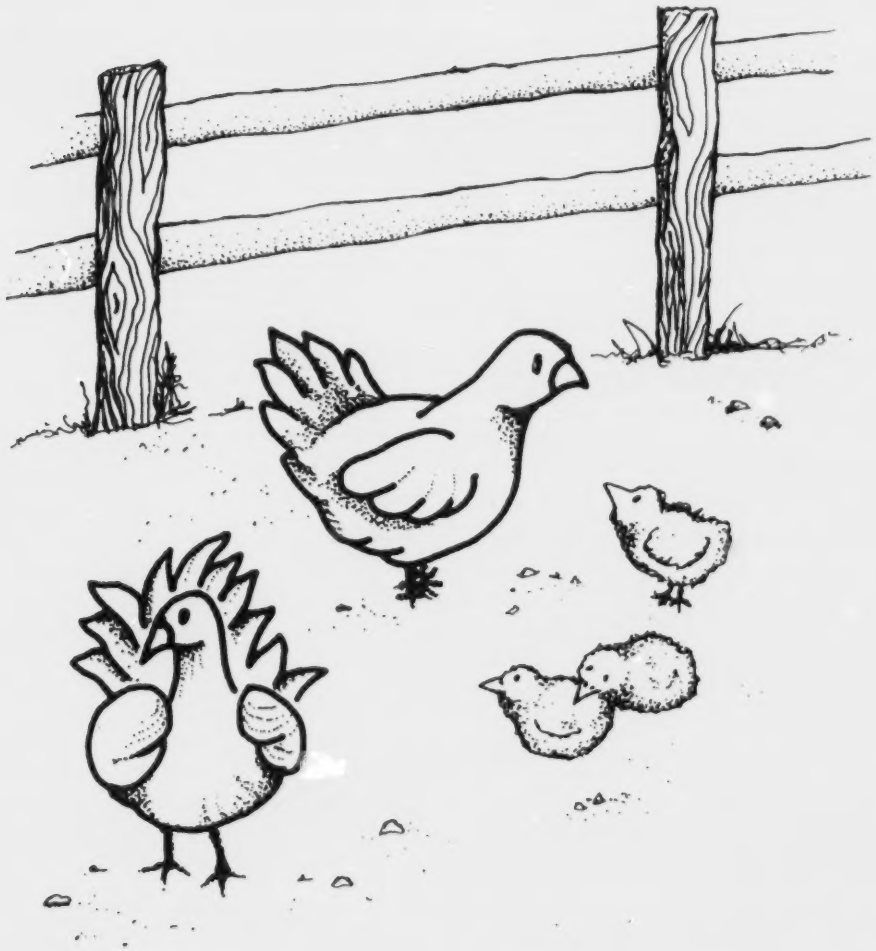
16

To End:

Discuss:

a. How does one group's lack of industriousness impact on the other groups?

b. What happens when one person on a team doesn't try very hard to win?



17

Activity 4
It's Me at Work

Trait:

Hardworking

Students will share work activities at home and at school.

Time:

15 to 20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

A copy of "It's Me" work sheet, markers or crayons

To Begin:

Ask your students to fill out the "It's Me" work sheet with the activities they do around the house and at school.

Encourage them to dress or decorate their stick figures.

Have your students find partners and take turns sharing the responsibilities they have at home. Each person should take one minute to share.

You may want to have them change partners each time they share new information from their sheets.

To End:

Discuss:

a. How does it feel to work hard and do a good job?

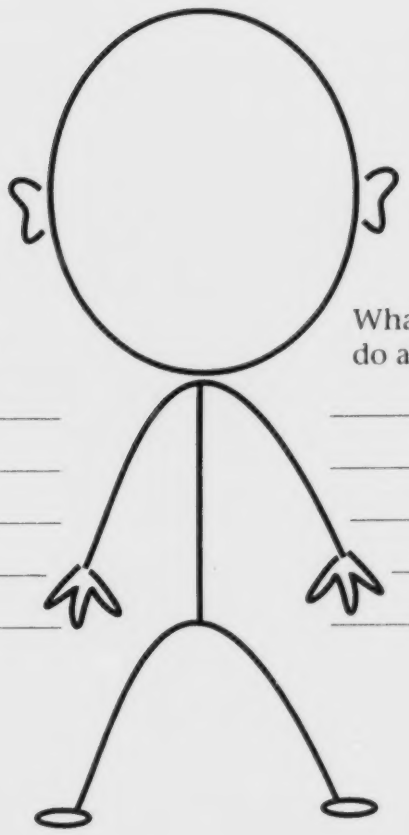
b. Who is it helping when you work hard?

c. What happens when someone does a sloppy job?

d. What happens when one person in a group of workers is the only one not working hard?

18

It's Me



What jobs do you do in your house?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What jobs do you do at school?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What jobs do you do outside of your house?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How do you do your homework?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Activity 5
How Can You Tell?

Trait:

Hardworking

Time:

20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

A copy of the work sheet for each participant, pencils or pens

To Begin:

Distribute the work sheets. Ask your students to read the descriptions and answer the questions that follow.

To End:

a. Invite your students to share their responses to each description.

b. Ask what other benefits may come from hard work. For example; the person who worked harder on his or her project got a better grade.

The person who practiced may win the contest.

Work Sheet

I. Two projects are displayed in the classroom. One is a crayon drawing of the sun and the planets around the sun. The other is a drawing as well, but each planet is labeled with its name. There is a line from each planet to the sun showing how far away each planet is from the sun. The planets are colored like they are in the first drawing, except the colors are as they actually appear in the solar system. The picture is titled "Our Solar System."

a. Which project took more time and effort? _____
How can you tell? _____ .

b. Which person learned more about the solar system, the one who did the first project or the second? _____
How can you tell? _____ .

II. Jim and Patsy are neighbors. They both have the responsibility of mowing the lawn for their families. Jim does his mowing every week. Patsy does hers only when her mother makes her, usually every two or three weeks.

a. Who is more hardworking, Jim or Patsy? _____
How can you tell? _____ .

b. Which person is more likely to get the lawn mowing done faster? _____
How can you tell? _____ .

III. Two friends, James and Lonnie, entered a bike riding contest. They had to ride their bikes through a long course full of obstacles. James practiced for an hour a day for two weeks while Lonnie did not practice at all. Lonnie only made it a short distance before he hit an obstacle. James made it all the way through.

a. Who was rewarded for hard work? _____
How can you tell? _____ .

b. Which boy has learned some new skills in bike riding? _____
How can you tell? _____ .

21

Practicing Working Hard

Purpose:

To practice the trait of working hard, give your students the following assignments:

AT HOME:

Clean up your room without being asked.

Put your plate and glass in the sink after meals.

Do all of your homework.

AT SCHOOL:

Complete your classwork.

Help your team win a game.

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Pick up paper and other litter from the ground.

Activity 6
High Goals

Trait:

Ambition

Students will practice goal-setting.

Time:

25 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Wire coat hangers, cardboard, crayons, or markers, scissors, decorative materials, string, and clothes line.

String the clothes line across a corner of the room.

To Begin:

Distribute the materials, including one wire coat hanger to each student.

Ask your students to make a mobile that tells about a goal they have set for themselves. Examples might include making better grades, learning a new sport, or playing an instrument.

Their names should be hanging from somewhere on the mobile.

Explain that the items on the mobile should represent the steps they must take to reach their goals.

Hang the mobiles from the clothes line when they are completed.

To End:

Have your students explain their mobiles to the class including what they must do to reach their goals.

Ask them what part ambition plays in reaching goals.

Discuss what other qualities are important in reaching goals.

Ask if they know what happens to a person who has no ambition.

(This could also be a written assignment.)

Understanding and Reflection

Purpose:

To summarize and evaluate the skills the students learned in this section.

Materials:

Paper and pencil for each student

Procedure:

Ask your students to write how they feel about their level of understanding of the character traits in this section.

Instruct them to include some ideas from their practice experiences.

2

CHILDREN should learn to be:

open-minded, courteous, tolerant, accepting, polite, broadminded...

25

Activity 7
What's Cooking?

Trait:

Open-mindedness

Time:

20 to 25 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Newsprint and markers

To Begin:

Divide your students into small groups and tell the groups that they will each be writing a recipe, only instead of a food recipe, they will be writing one for an open-minded person.

Explain that the ingredients in the recipe will be the characteristics that they believe go into making an open-minded person. Acceptance of all people would be an example of an ingredient.

The groups will write their recipes on newsprint exactly as they would write a recipe for a cake or casserole. Remind them to include measurements for the ingredients and instructions on mixing and baking.

Invite each group to stand and share their recipes with the class.

To End:

1. Point out the similar characteristics on the different group's lists.
2. Have the students vote on the three most important characteristics of an open minded person.
3. Ask your students if open-minded people make good friends. Why?

Activity 8
Please and Thank You

Trait:

Courtesy

Time:

20 to 25 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Plain paper, magazines, scissors, and glue.

To Begin:

Distribute collage materials to each student.

Tell them to look through the magazines for pictures that represent courtesy to another person.

Instruct them to cut out the pictures and arrange and glue them on the paper to create a collage.

Ask for volunteers to share their collages with the rest of the class.

Post the collages in your classroom.

To End:

Discuss:

a. Why is it important for people to be courteous to each other?

b. What would the world be like if no one showed courteous behavior?

Activity 9
Simple Acts of Kindness

Trait:

Courtesy

Time:

20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

paper, pencils or pens

To Begin:

Ask your students to think of something nice someone did for them recently. Explain that courteous or thoughtful acts can be very simple—like mother fixing them a really good dinner or grandpa going to one of their ball games.

Ask for volunteers to share their experiences with the class.

Distribute writing paper and instruct your students to write a thank you note to the person who did something nice.

Note: You may want to discuss the components of a thank you note before your students begin writing.

Ask for volunteers to read their thank you notes to the class.

To End:

a. Ask your students why it is courteous to write a thank you note when someone does something nice for them.

b. Ask them when they last wrote a thank you note. What was the occasion?

Activity 10
Everybody's Doing It

Trait:

Courtesy

Students will practice courteous behavior throughout the day.

Time:

Ongoing

Materials:

None

To Begin:

During a faculty meeting, work with the principal, other teachers, and staff members to map out a plan for courteous behavior for a week or more, in which the entire school can participate.

a. First, choose the courteous behavior everyone in school will practice. It is often easiest to start with a list of words the students and staff will use during interactions with each other that week. (See the list below.)

b. Second, choose a time frame during which all school personnel and students will practice using courteous words. At least one week should be allotted to this activity.

c. Third, make copies of the words the staff decides upon to post in all rooms of the school including bathrooms, the cafeteria, hallways and offices. Be sure that the custodians, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and all others who have contact with the students are involved.

Explain the plan to your students. Discuss when and how courteous words are used. Give examples like the following:

a. What courteous words do you say if you bump into somebody?

b. What courteous word do you use when asking for something?

Discuss why courteous words are important.

Each morning remind your students about using courteous words. Your school may want to put a reminder on the PA system.

To End:

At the end of one week of using courteous words, invite your students to share some of their experiences.

Note: You may want to make a contest between classes to see which one can appropriately use the most courteous words.

Courteous Words

please, thank you, you're welcome, excuse me, pardon me

Practicing Courtesy

Purpose:

To practice the trait of courtesy

AT HOME:

Speak to all your relatives, including brothers and sisters, in a calm, pleasant voice.

AT SCHOOL:

If you accidentally bump into someone, say "I'm sorry" or "Pardon me."

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Hold the door open for an older person going into a store or restaurant. Give an older or handicapped person your seat on the bus. .

Activity 11
Come and Get Me

Trait:

Tolerance

There are times when students are placed on teams with other students they don't particularly like. This activity is intended to demonstrate the need to be tolerant of others.

Time:

10 to 15 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

A large open area like a gymnasium or playing field, bright colored pillows, beanbags, cones, or other markers.

The markers will be used to designate stations. Put the markers out around the edge of the open area. Designate as many stations as there are members on each team. For example, if there are teams of five, there should be five stations marked, including the starting station.

To Begin:

Gather the teams at the starting station. Explain that one team member will wait at the start and other team members will go to each of the other stations to wait.

At the word "go," the starting team member is to run to a station and pick up the waiting team member. Those two team members must join hands and go to another station to pick up another team member. The team continues until all team members have been picked up and are holding hands. The team should then return to the starting station. The first team in wins.

Except for the starter, no team member can leave his or her station until he or she has joined hands with another member of the team.

Teams may pick up their members in any order they wish.

If competing teams touch each other at all, both teams must return to their stations and begin again.

If any team members fall down or drop their hands, that team must return to their stations and begin again.

To End:

Discuss:

a. How would it feel if a team member came by and refused to hold your hand or made a rude noise or a face at you?

b. What could you say to let that person know that your feelings were hurt?

c. What problems would your team experience if team members were not tolerant of each other?

Activity 12
New and Different

Trait:

Acceptance

Time:

15 to 20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Ask your students to partner with someone in their group.

Instruct each student to think of something about his or her background, culture, family, or ethnic group that is unique and interesting and tell it to the partner. It could be a song, a saying, a tradition, or just a bit of history or information.

After each partner has had the opportunity to share, ask the students to take turns telling the group what they learned about their partner's heritage.

To End:

Discuss:

a. How were family traditions you heard about from your partner different from your family's traditions?

b. Is one family's traditions better than another? Why or why not?

c. Is something that is different wrong? Why or why not?

Activity 13
Body Talk

Trait:

Politeness

Time:

20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Brainstorm with your students a list of actions that are impolite when someone is speaking to you and record the ideas on the board. The list might include:

Turning your back

Rolling your eyes

Making a face

Tapping your foot or fingers

Looking at the clock

Sighing loudly

Playing with a pencil or toy

Crossing your arms and looking bored

Instruct your students to find partners. Explain that one partner will talk to the other partner about something funny or exciting that happened, and the other partner will act impolite using the actions listed on the board.

Give the partners two minutes to do this activity and then have them switch roles.

To End:

Discuss as a class:

What is impolite about the actions listed above?

How does it make you feel when someone is impolite to you?

Activity 14
It's in Code

Trait:

Broadminded

Time:

30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

A copy of the code sheet for each student

To Begin:

Distribute a copy of the code sheet to each student. Tell your students to figure out what the sentences say by applying the code formula of A= 1, B = 2 and so forth.

After the students have decoded their sentences, ask for volunteers to read them aloud.

After each sentence is read, ask the students for examples of what the sentence means.

To End:

Discuss:

a. Why do broadminded people make good friends?

b. Why do you need broadminded people on a school board or in the government?

Decoded Sentences

1. Broadminded people like to try new things.
2. For example, they like to eat new foods, meet different kinds of people, and learn new games.
3. Broadminded people will try someone else's way of doing things.
4. They do not judge others.

Code Sheet

A = 1	K = 20	U = 14
B = 2	L = 21	V = 15
C = 3	M = 22	W = 16
D = 4	N = 23	X = 17
E = 5	O = 24	Y = 18
F = 6	P = 25	Z = 19
G = 7	Q = 26	
H = 8	R = 11	
I = 9	S = 12	
J = 10	T = 13	

1. 2 11 24 1 4 22 9 23 4 5 4 25 5 24 25 21 5 21 9 20 5 13 24 13 11 18 23 5 16 13 8 9 23 7 12.

2. 6 24 11 5 17 1 22 25 21 5, 13 8 5 18 21 9 20 5 13 24 5 1 13 23 5 16 6 24 24 4 12, 22 5 5 13 4 9 6 6 5 11 5 23 13 20 9 23 4 12 24 6 25 5 24 25 21 5, 1 23 4 21 5 1 11 23 23 5 16 7 1 22 5 12.

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4. 13 8 5 18 4 24 23 24 13 10 14 4 7 5 24 13 8 5 11 12.

38

Understanding and Reflection

Purpose:

To summarize and evaluate the skills the students learned in this section.

Materials:

A paper and pencil for each student.

Procedure:

Have your students write how they feel about their level of understanding of the character traits in this section.

Be sure they include some ideas from their practice experiences.

3

CHILDREN should learn to be:

responsible, accountable, honest, trustworthy, loyal, reliable, dependable...

Activity 14
Where is Puffy?

Trait:

Responsibility

Time:

15 to 20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Copies of "The Story of Puffy." Each story should be cut in sentence strips.

To Begin:

Divide your class into small groups. Give a complete set of story strips to each group. Make sure the order of the strips is mixed up.

The groups should divide the strips equally among the group members.

The task is to put the strips in an order that forms a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

This activity is timed, so be sure groups do not start until you say "go."

Explain to your students that each group member must place his or her own strips in the story. Other group members may contribute suggestions and advice. The story must make sense all the way through.

Set a time limit, but be sure to allow all groups to finish building their story.

Say "go."

When time is up, read the master sheet aloud so the groups can see how close they are to the original story.

To End:

Discuss the following questions:

a. How did Evan's neglect of his responsibilities affect others in this story?

b. How was Evan affected?

The Story of Puffy

Evan was not always a responsible person.

Sometimes he didn't do his homework.

Other times he did his homework but forgot to take it to school.

And when Evan was at home, he would do some of his chores sometimes.

And other times he would not do any of his chores.

One of those chores was letting the dog, Puffy, in at night. Puffy stayed outside during the day and slept in the kitchen at night.

There was a night, not long ago, when Evan forgot about Puffy.

The dog waited on the porch that night for Evan to let him in.

But after awhile the porch got cold. So Puffy went looking for a warmer place to sleep.

First he wandered into Mr. Brook's yard. He spotted Mr. Brook's cat and chased her up a tree.

The poor cat could not get back down.

When Mr. Brooks saw his cat in the tree, he called the fire department to come to the rescue.

Meanwhile Puffy was sniffing around Mrs. Murphy's bushes.

He knocked over Mrs. Murphy's trash can.

Mrs. Murphy thought it was a prowler and called the police.

The Parker family lived next door to Mrs. Murphy and Evan's dog headed over there.

He went up the Parker's back steps and scratched on the door.

The scratching set off an alarm.

The noise of the alarm woke up the whole Parker family.

The alarm scared Puffy and he started to run.

He ran past the fire truck and the police car that were coming down the street.

In fact Puffy kept running right out of the neighborhood.

No one in the neighborhood got much sleep that night, especially Evan.

He spent all night looking for the dog.

He spent the next day explaining why Puffy had been loose.

Evan had to explain to his family, the neighbors, the police and the fire department.

He was so busy explaining that he missed his ball game.

His teammates were upset because they had counted on him.

His team lost.

All because Evan wasn't very responsible.

Activity 16
Who's Responsible?

Trait:

Responsibility

Time:

10 to 20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Instruct your students to read the following situations and answer the questions as though each one happened at their home.

a. You say you will be home right after school. You don't come home until 5:00. Who will care? _____
Why? _____

Is this an example of responsible behavior? _____
Why? _____ .

b. You come home from school with your clothes muddy and torn, but you say everything is okay. Who will care? _____
Why? _____
Is this an example of responsible behavior? _____
Why? _____

c. You say you will feed the dog before going to the ball field and you do. Who will care? _____
Why? _____
Is this an example of responsible behavior? _____
Why? _____

d. You go on a crash diet and don't eat anything but carrots for a week. Who will care? _____
Why? _____
Is this an example of responsible behavior? _____
Why? _____

To End:

Ask your students to write two family situations that might really happen in their homes that show responsible behavior. Have them share with the class who will care and why.

Activity 17
Get a job

Trait:

Responsibility

Students will understand that all jobs have some similar responsibilities

Time:

30 to 40 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Copy the job list included below on the board.

Divide the students into small groups and assign two jobs from the list to each group.

Tell the groups to make lists of the responsibilities that go with each job. They should include such things as being on time and cleanliness, where those apply.

Once the groups have completed their work, have them read the responsibilities aloud for each job and write them beside the job listed on the board. Each group may want to choose a recorder for this task.

Work with the class to identify those responsibilities that apply to more than one job. Circle those responsibilities that are on the board. Add any that are not listed.

To End:

a. Ask your students what responsibilities all jobs have in common.

b. Ask them to decide which of the responsibilities apply to attending school and which ones apply to home.

Job List

FIREMAN

TEACHER

DOCTOR

CARPENTER

COOK

CAR SALESMAN

BANKER

STORE CLERK

MECHANIC

POLICE OFFICER

TRUCK DRIVER

FARMER

47

Practicing Responsibility

Purpose:

To practice the trait of responsibility.

AT HOME:

Help set the table, rake the leaves, shovel the snow, feed the dog.

AT SCHOOL:

Be responsible for taking up the lunch tickets, passing out the papers, taking a message to the office, turning in your homework on time.

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Pick up litter on the sidewalk, put your own trash in a receptacle, arrive on time to a movie so as not to disturb other people.

Activity 18
What If?

Trait:

Accountability

Time:

20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Small slips of paper with "What If" statements written on them, newsprint, magic markers

To Begin:

Divide your class into small groups.

Distribute one slip of paper to each group.

Explain to your students that each group will pretend to have the power to make the statements on their slip of paper happen.

Tell the groups to brainstorm and record ideas around their "What If" statement on the newsprint. Allow 8 to 10 minutes for brainstorming. Write the "Questions to Consider" on the board and explain that these questions will help the groups formulate their ideas.

What if...:

...money grew on trees?

...dogs could get drivers licenses?

...the President of the US was a 10-year-old girl?

...wearing shoes was illegal?

...you had to be 30 years old to eat pizza?

...all people looked exactly alike?

...chocolate grew everywhere like wildflowers?

...there were no traffic lights?

Questions to consider when brainstorming:

a. Is this a good or bad idea? Why?
b. How would you be able to tell if the idea worked or did not work?
c. Who would be held accountable if this idea did not work or who would get credit if it did?

To End:

Invite each group to share their "What If" statements and the ideas they recorded with the other groups.

Activity 19
Stop and Go

Trait:

Honesty

Time:

20 to 30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Red, yellow, and green paper or cards

To Begin:

Divide your students into small groups.

Distribute one sheet each of red, yellow, and green paper to each group.

Read the situations aloud to your class.

Tell your students that after each situation is read, the groups should decide how honest the people in the situations are being.

Explain that groups should decide among themselves about the honesty factor and vote as a group by holding up the appropriate color paper. Tell them that GREEN means that a high degree of honesty is being shown. YELLOW means that they are being somewhat honest. RED means that they are being dishonest.

Situations

1. You did not study for your math test so you copy the answers off your neighbor's paper without your neighbor knowing.

2. Your friend allows you to copy her homework since you did not have time to do it.

3. You see a $20 bill fall out of someone's pocket. You pick it up and keep it.

4. You find a $20 bill in an empty parking lot and keep it.

5. You find a ring on the floor of a department store and turn it in to lost and found.

6. You say you are sick when someone you do not like invites you to a party.

7. You take money out of your sister's desk, intending to repay it before she finds out.

8. You tell people that you caught a 10 pound fish and you did.

9. You tell your parents you watered the flowers when in fact you forgot. You intend to do it the next day.

To End:

a. Discuss with the class the reasons groups voted differently in some situations.

b. Ask the students to think of some other situations that involve honesty and discuss whether they are red, yellow, or green light situations.

Activity 20
Honest People

Trait:

Honesty

Students will practice identifying honesty.

Time:

15 to 25 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

2 signs:

a. YES THAT'S RIGHT

b. NO THAT'S WRONG

To Begin:

Post the Right and Wrong signs on opposite sides of the room.

Tell your students you will read statements about honesty aloud. They should listen carefully to each statement. If they think the statement describes honest people, they should go stand at the side of the room where the sign "Yes, That's Right" is posted.

If your students do not believe the statement describes honest people, they should go stand under the sign that says "No, That's Wrong."

Read the first statement. Tell them to decide if this statement describes honest people. Once they have made their choices and are standing under one of the signs, ask for volunteers to explain their choices. Help the students clarify their answers.

Continue this process for each statement.

To End:

After your students have returned to their seats, ask the following questions:

a. What have you learned about honest behavior?

b. Why would you want your friends to be honest?

Honest People

...return the things they borrow.

...find someone's lunch money and turn it in to the teacher.

...change their bowling scores so they will win.

...tell the truth.

...admit it when they do something wrong.

...tell a secret they promised not to tell.

...raise their hand if the teacher asks who was talking.

...take a pencil out of someone's desk without asking.

...give their real opinion when someone says, "Do you like my shirt?"

...don't tell the clerk that you were given too much change.

...eat grapes from the grocery store without paying for them.

Activity 21
Buy! Buy! Buy!

Trait:

Honesty

Students will explore the concept of honesty in advertising.

Time:

15 minutes of class time

Materials/Preparation:

Copies of the "Commercial Report Form" for each student.

To Begin:

Distribute one "Commercial Report Form" to each student. Tell them to take the forms home. Instruct them to watch the commercials during a 30-minute period of television.

Explain that they should fill out the "Commercial Report Form" on the commercials they see.

When your students return to class with the completed forms, ask for volunteers to share what they learned about honesty in commercials.

To End:

Ask the following questions:

a. How do we really know if the people in the commercial use the product?

b. How do we really know if the product works like the commercial says?

c How can we find out if the product tastes as good as they say?

d. What can we do if the product does not do what the commercial says?

Commercial Report Form

1. Product being advertised _____

   Words used to describe product _____

   _____

   Pictures shown during commercial _____

   _____

   Do you believe the commercial is honest about the product? yes___ no___

   Explain your answer _____

   _____

2. Product being advertised _____

   Words used to describe product _____

   _____

   Pictures shown during commercial _____

   _____

   Do you believe the commercial is honest about the product? yes___ no___

   Explain your answer _____

   _____

3. Product being advertised _____

   Words used to describe product _____

   _____

   Pictures shown during commercial _____

   _____

   Do you believe the commercial is honest about the product? yes___ no___

   Explain your answer _____

   _____

Activity 22
How Good is Your Word?

Trait:

Trustworthy

Students will understand the importance of keeping promises

Time:

20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Two pieces of paper or cardboard with the words "Choice #1" and "Choice #2" printed on them.

To Begin:

Post the "Choice" signs on opposite sides of the room. Explain to your students that you will be reading several problems. Tell them you will also read two solutions to each of the problems. If they would choose the first solution, they should go and stand by the sign that says "Choice #1." If they would choose the second solution, they should go and stand by the sign that says "Choice #2." If they have thought of another solution, they should stand in the middle of the room and be prepared to tell what their solution is to the problem.

Read the first problem and the two solutions.

After the students have made their choices, ask for volunteers under each "Choice" sign to explain their choices to the class. Ask the students in the middle of the room what their solutions are and why they chose them. Follow this procedure for all the problems.

To End:

As a class, discuss:

a. Why it is important to keep your word?

b. What impact does breaking your word have on other people?

Problems and Solutions

1. You are the pitcher on a softball team and you have a game on Saturday. Your favorite uncle calls and wants to take you to an amusement park on Saturday at the same time as the game.

   Choice #1—You tell your uncle you can't go and you go to the game.

   Choice #2—You forget the game and go with your uncle.

   Any other choices?

2. You promise your mother you will do your homework right after school. A friend comes over and want to ride bikes.

   Choice #1—You tell your friend no and do your homework.

   Choice #2—You don't do your homework and ride bikes with your friend.

   Any other choices?

3. Every Saturday morning at 10:00 o'clock, you walk your elderly neighbor's dog. This Saturday there is a cartoon special on television at 10:00 that you really, really want to see.

   Choice #1—You walk the dog and miss the special.

   Choice #2—You skip the dog walking so you can watch the special.

   Any other choices?

4. You promise you will play a game with your little sister after dinner. Your best friend calls and wants to talk.

   Choice #1—You tell your friend that you can't talk and play with your sister.

   Choice #2—You tell your sister you want to talk with your friend.

   Any other choices?

5. You told your piano teacher you would practice for 20 minutes every day. Usually, you do your homework, practice piano and are allowed to watch your favorite show for 30 minutes before bedtime. Today you have so much homework, you finish just 30 minutes before bedtime.

   Choice #1—You practice your music and skip your show.

   Choice #2—You watch television and skip practicing.

   Any other choices?

Activity 23
Funny Papers

Trait:

Loyalty

Time:

30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Comic sections of newspapers, plain paper, glue, and a pair of scissors for each student.

Note:

This activity works well as a homework assignment.

To Begin:

Write the word "Loyalty" on the board and discuss what it means with your class.

Distribute the materials and instruct your students to look through the comics to find as many examples of loyalty as they can.

Tell them to glue each strip they find on a piece of paper and write why it demonstrates loyalty underneath. Tell them they should be prepared to explain how the comic strip demonstrates loyalty to the class.

Ask each student to stand and share their strips with the class. If time is limited, ask for volunteers to share and have all students post their strips in the classroom.

To End:

Ask your students the following questions:

a. Why do you think loyalty to friends, family, and country is important?

b. How have you shown loyalty to a friend or family member?

c. How has a friend or family member shown loyalty to you?

Activity 24
Loyalty in History

Trait:

Loyalty

Time:

25 minutes of class time

Materials/Preparation:

Library books

To Begin:

Ask your students for examples of loyalty to a friend.

Ask them what it means to be loyal to their families. In both cases, encourage students to share personal experiences. Be sure they are able to explain how the experience shows loyalty.

Explain that there are many stories from history of people who showed great loyalty to their country.

Note: You may want to stop here and tell the story of Betsy Ross, Paul Revere, Nathan Hale, Harriet Tubman, or some other famous historical figures.

Tell your students to choose a biography of a famous historical figure from the library.

Instruct them to write a book report telling how this person showed loyalty to his or her country.

To End:

a. Have each student tell in just a few sentences how their person showed loyalty.

b. Discuss people in recent times who have shown loyalty to their country.

Suggestions for Biographies

Martin Luther King
Abraham Lincoln
Eleanor Roosevelt
Betsy Ross
Nathan Hale
George Washington
Harriet Tubman

61

Activity 25
People You Count On

Trait:

Reliability

Time:

20 to 30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Index cards, large mural paper

To Begin:

1. Write the following occupations on individual index cards.

   Police Officer

   Teacher

   Mail Carrier

   Janitor

   Doctor

   Store salesperson

2. Divide the class into small groups and distribute the index cards, one to a group.

3. Post the questions below on the board or newsprint and instruct your students to work in small groups to answer them.

   Why is it important for this person to be reliable?

   What might happen if the person was unreliable?

4. Ask each group to report their discussion to the class.

5. Instruct students to draw their person on the mural paper. Have them add others that were mentioned during the discussions.

6. Title the mural "People We Count On."

To End:

Brainstorm with your class some ways they can show reliability.

Activity 26
Newspaper Walk

Trait:

Dependable

Time:

20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Sheets of newspaper, two per each pair of students, plus extras

To Begin:

Instruct your students to pair up. Have the pairs form two or three teams.

Distribute newspaper sheets, two sheets for each pair of students.

Mark a distance with tape at the starting point and turn-around point.

Explain the following procedure to your students:

The first pair on each team will start the race.

One of the pair (the setter) will set a sheet of newspaper in front of the partner (the walker).

The walker partner must step onto the newspaper.

The setter then puts a second sheet of newspaper down and the walker steps on it.

The setter must pick up the first sheet from behind the walker and place it in front so the walker can step on it.

The setter keeps moving the newspaper forward to get the walker to the turnaround point.

When that point is reached, the setter and walker switch roles and do the newspaper walk back to the starting point

When a pair gets back to the starting point, a second pair can begin and the first pair sits down.

If a paper tears when it is stepped on or moved, the pair must return to start and begin again.

The first team that has all the students sitting down wins.

To End:

a. Ask your students why it was important to have dependable partners in this race.

b. Why is it important to be dependable?

c. What are some of the consequences of not being dependable?

Understanding and Reflection

Purpose:

To summarize and evaluate the skills the students learned in this section.

Materials:

Paper and pencil for each student

Procedure:

Have your students write how they feel about their level of understanding of the character traits in this section.

Have them include some ideas from their practice experiences.

65

4

CHILDREN should learn to be:
protective of the environment, law-abiding, patriotic, good citizens...

66

Activity 27
A World of Flowers

Trait:

Protective of the environment

Time:

5 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Tell your students to think of themselves as beautiful flowers growing in a garden. The flowers will grow to the following directions:

a. Stand straight and tall but stay rooted right where you are.

b. Bloom by lifting your arms up and out like petals.

c. Sway in the breeze, arms held high.

d. A hard rain is causing your petals to droop and the stems to slump over.

e. The sun is out again and you can stand straight and bloom once more.

f. Sway gently in the breeze once again.

g. Tell the students to be seated.

To End:

Discuss the following:

1. What do people do to the environment that could hurt wild flowers?
2. Why is it all citizens responsibility to protect the environment (air, water, plants)?
3. What can you do to help protect our environment?
4. Is picking flowers from a park or roadside destroying the environment? Why?

Draw a picture of what you can do to protect the environment.

Being Protective of the Environment

Purpose:

To practice protecting the environment

AT HOME:

Make sure no dangerous chemicals are poured down the drain in the sink.

Make sure outdoor fires are attended properly.

Help plant flowers in your yard.

AT SCHOOL:

Walk on sidewalks instead of the grass.

Put all litter in trash cans.

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Obey all signs in parks and recreation areas.

Donate money to environmental causes.

Instead of throwing trash out of a car window, save it for a roadside litter barrel.

Activity 28
Playing by the Rules

Trait:

Law-abiding

To show how rules, policies, and consequences must be sensible and fair.

Time:

15 to 20 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Post one set of rules, listed on the next page, near the door of the classroom before the students arrive. Do not call their attention to the posted list until instructed to do so in the activity. Begin this activity in a serious manner.

To Begin:

Explain to your students that they will be exploring how rules and policies affect the safety of the school.

Tell them that there is a list of rules and consequences for the school posted in the room that you expect everyone to be familiar with by now.

The students will begin to express objections at this time. Point to the posted rules and agree to give each student a copy.

Distribute the handout entitled "School Rules and Consequences."

Brainstorm the problems with the rules and consequences on the list. Write all responses on a flip chart or the board.

To End:

Discuss:

a. How did you feel about these rules?

b. What is wrong with them?

c. Are some rules and laws easier to abide by than others? Explain.

Note: You may want to have small groups each try to rewrite one of the rules.

School Safety Rules and Consequences

Rules

1. No talking before class begins.
2. No one should sit down until the teacher starts speaking.
3. No hats should be worn in the building.
4. See rule 32 below regarding what to do if you are absent.
5. Bathroom breaks will be permitted at 9:10 a.m. and 4:27 p.m. on Wednesdays and 10:15 and 2:50 on all other days except Fridays.
6. Anyone wishing to leave early must notify the teacher four weeks in advance.
7. Proper attire for schools includes socks, shirts and hats.
8. If you have concerns about these rules, you must write them on 3 x 5 cards and tell them to the school board at its once a year meeting.
9. Girls may not wear hoop skirts wider than 3 feet across.

Consequences

1. Girls breaking any of the above rules will write a two-page report on the importance of rules.
2. Violation of rules 2, 4, and 7 will result in expulsion from school unless the student in violation brings a note from his or her parent explaining the negligence, at which time said note will be presented to a jury of other students to determine appropriate consequences for violation.
3. Not wearing a hat in school: first offense: offender to wear a dunce cap for one hour.

Activity 29
Law Makers

Trait:

Law-abiding

Time:

25 to 30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Newsprint, markers, index cards. Write the names of the different "lands" on individual index cards.

Lands

Candyland (everything in it is made of candy)

Magic Kingdom (all the fairytale characters live here)

Never Never Land (no one ever grows up)

Tropical Paradise (everyone has everything they need)

Toyland (everything is under the control of the dolls and toys)

Computer Land (everything is run by computers)

To Begin:

Instruct the class to divide into small groups.

Distribute newsprint, markers and one index card to each group of students. You may give the same "Land" to more than one group or give the same "Land" to every group.

Tell the groups they are to design a very basic government for their Land. Their design should include 4 or 5 laws for governing people and the means for electing a leader.

Tell them they have 15 minutes to work and should develop their government as much as possible during that time.

Ask the groups to record the laws and other information about the "Land" on newsprint.

When 15 minutes has elapsed, ask the groups to post their newsprint and explain their government to the rest of the class.

To End:

Discuss:

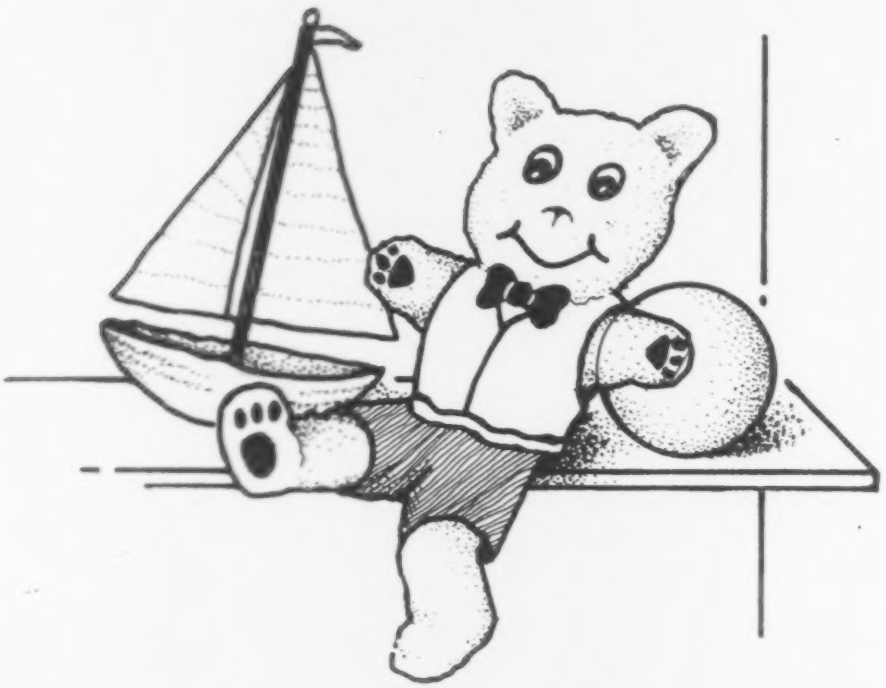
a. How were the governments chosen like or different than the one in the United States?

b. Why does any kind of government need laws?

c. What would happen in your land without laws?

d. What would happen in our country without laws?

Note: You may want to have the entire class vote on where they would prefer to live.



72

Activity 30
Let's Take a Commercial Break

Trait:

Patriotism

Time:

30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Divide your class into small groups. Instruct each group to make a list of some of the things they like about their country. For example, freedom of speech or a good climate.

When they have completed their lists, tell them to discuss ways they could advertise these qualities to the class. They may want to think about the different kinds of advertisements and commercials they see on television or hear on the radio.

Instruct your students to make up a commercial about their state or country using the information on their lists. Remind them that commercials are short, attention getting, and make just one or two points.

Some suggestions are: a jingle or rhyme, a song, an interview, or an imitation of a well known commercial.

Ask each group to perform their commercial for the class.

To End:

Discuss:

a. What were the important parts of each commercial?

b. What are some ways that people show patriotism?

Activity 31
Future Citizen

Trait:

Good citizen

Time:

20 minutes; longer if combined with a lesson in Social Studies

Materials/Preparation:

Library reference materials

To Begin:

Tell your students that in order to be a future good citizen of their state, they will need to know about the government, products and industry, land forms, and other characteristics of the state.

Divide them into small groups and assign each group a project around a feature of their state. You may want to write choices on small slips of paper and have each group draw for their assignment.

Set the parameters of the project. It can be as extensive or limited as you wish. You may want visual representations of their assignment and written oral reports.

Display the students' projects in the classroom.

Ask representatives from each group to explain to the class about their group's project.

To End:

Discuss as a class:

a. Why do good citizens need to know about the state in which they live?

b. How will knowing about your state's government make you a better citizen?

Understanding and Reflection

Purpose:

To summarize and evaluate the skills the students learned in this section.

Materials:

A paper and pencil for each student.

Procedure:

Have your students write how they feel about their level of understanding of the character traits in this section.

Have them include some ideas from their practice experiences.

5

CHILDREN should learn to be:
good sports, courageous, brave...

76

Activity 32
What a Good Sport

Trait:

Sportsmanship

Time:

10 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Ask your class how a "poor sport" behaves.

Instruct each member of the class to write a paragraph about an act of good sportsmanship (real or made-up) that they know about.

Tell each student to find a partner and read each other their stories.

Those partners should then find another partnership and exchange stories with them.

From the groups of four, ask for volunteers to share their stories with the whole class.

To End:

Discuss as a group:

a. Why is sportsmanship important?

b. Why is it more fun to play a game with good sports?

c. Name other areas of life where you can find sportsmanship besides sporting events and games?

Activity 33
The Big Game

Trait:

Sportsmanship

Time:

30 to 40 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Copies of "The Big Game Story" and phrases, pencils with erasers

To Begin:

Instruct your students to read "The Big Game Story" and fill in the blanks from the phrases listed below using pencils.

Ask for a volunteer to read the story aloud including the added phrases.

Now tell the class to erase the phrases showing poor sportsmanship and replace them with phrases showing good sportsmanship.

For example: the first blank sentence using a phrase from the list might read, "Look out, stupid," he said when the catcher ducked the bat. Rewritten to show good sportsmanship, the sentence could read, "Whoops, sorry," he said when the catcher ducked the bat.

Note: You may want your students to work in groups for the second part of this activity.

Ask for volunteers to read the revised story.

To End:

Discuss situations that you have been in when there was poor sportsmanship.

How did they make you feel?

How does name-calling relate to poor sportsmanship?

The Big Game Story

Today's little league ball game was important. If the Blue Hornets wanted to be the league champions, they had to win this game against the Red Bombers. The Blue Hornet's coach, Mr. Baxley, reminded the team about good sportsmanship. He explained that the Red Bombers were not known to be good sports.

The Red Bombers were up at bat. A red-haired boy swung the bat around carelessly, almost hitting the catcher, "_____," he said when the catcher ducked the bat.

The pitch came and the red-haired boy knocked it into right field. The second baseman fielded the ball and ran to second, colliding with the red-haired boy as he slid to the base. "_____," said the red-haired boy. "OUT", said the umpire. "_____," yelled the Red Bombers from the bench.

The next played hit a fly ball right to the pitcher. "OUT!" said the umpire. "_____," yelled the Red Bombers from the bench.

The third batter was the team's best. The Blue Hornets in the field braced themselves. Sure enough, the batter hit the ball into the outfield. He was leaving third and headed for home when the third baseman got the ball and threw it to home. The catcher caught the ball and tagged the runner. "OUT!" yelled the umpire.

A Red Bomber walked by the catcher and grabbed the catcher's shirt. "_____," he said. "_____," said the catcher.

The Blue Hornets were up to bat. The first player struck out. "_____," yelled the Red Bomber first baseman.

The second batter hit a ground ball to left field. He slid into first base seconds before the first baseman tagged him. "Safe," yelled the umpire. "_____," yelled the first baseman.

One person was on first, one out and the third batter was up. She struck out. "_____," said the Red Bomber pitcher.

The next batter hit a home run and slowly ran around the bases. "_____," said the first baseman when the batter ran by. "_____," said the Red Bomber second baseman to the Blue Hornet player. "_____," said the third baseman as the player rounded third and headed for home.

The game ended with the Blue Hornets winning 4 to 1 over the Red Bombers. "_____," said the Red Bomber players as they left the field.

80.

Phrase List

Look out, stupid
Move it, jerk
Boo
No fair
I'm gonna punch you out
Try it
Too bad for you
Cheater
Girls can't hit
Just luck
We're still gonna cream you
Just a lucky hit
Lousy game

Practicing Sportsmanship

Purpose:

To practice the trait of sportsmanship

AT HOME:

Have each member of the family get a turn picking a television show to watch.

Let your brother or sister sit by the window in the front seat of the car.

Try a new food your mother fixed for dinner.

AT SCHOOL:

Practice raising your hand if you know the answer instead of shouting it out.

After you have given an answer, let someone else have a turn.

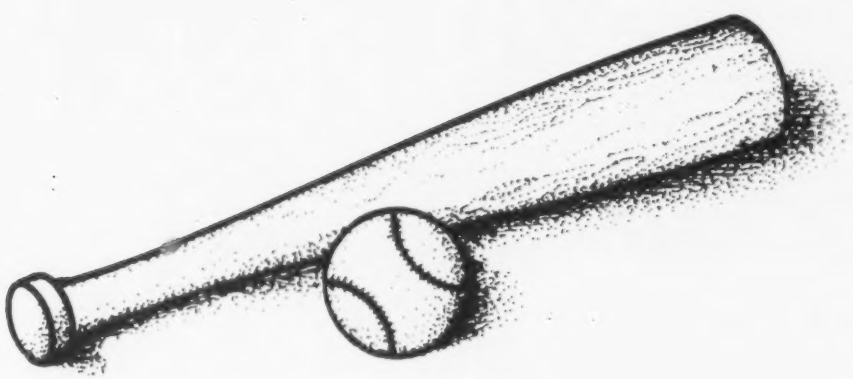
Be on a team that is really not your first choice.

Eat something in the cafeteria that you really don't like.

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Clap your hands at a play or show even if you didn't really like it, if you think the people tried to do a good job.

Wait your turn in a line at the grocery store.



82

Activity 34
Two Circles

Trait:

Courage

It takes courage to be able to say no, especially to a friend or in an inappropriate situation.

Time:

10 to 15 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Instruct the class to line up in an open area.

Have them count off by 2s.

Tell all number ones to form a circle. Tell all number twos to form a circle around the number ones.

Tell your students to face someone in the opposite circle.

Instruct circle one students to think of something each might ask of a friend. For example, "Can I borrow your science book?" or "Can I have a ride home today?" or "Will you help me after school?" Circle two students should think of a firm way to say no. For example, "No, I can't." "No, sorry." "No, maybe another time."

Instruct circle one students to begin with the person they are facing and to ask for what they want. Then, moving to the right, they should ask each person in circle two the same question. Circle two should stand still and say "No" in their own way to each person in circle one as he or she comes by. (If your group is small, go around twice.)

After circle one is back where it started, have the students reverse. Circle two will ask for something and move around circle one. Circle one will stand still and say "No."

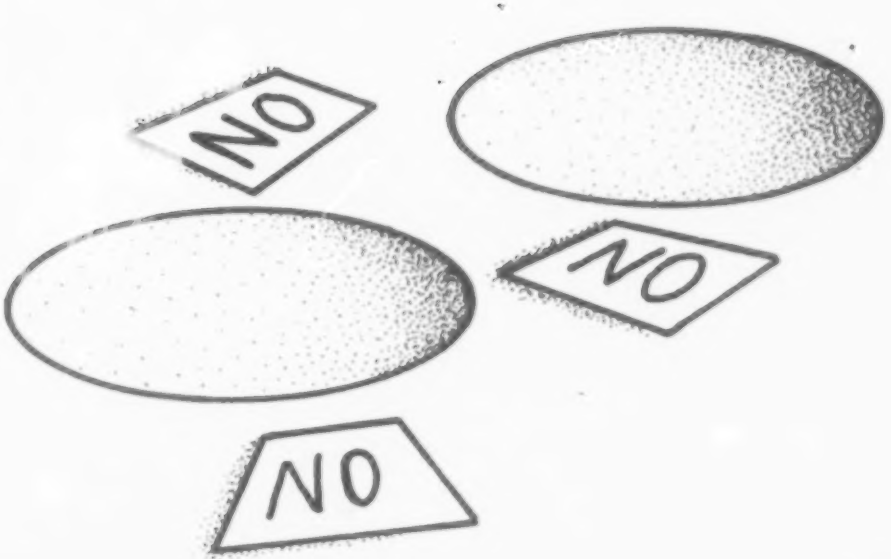
To End:

Discuss:

a. When was it most difficult to say "No," at the beginning of the exercise or at the end? Why?

b. Was it easier or harder to say "No" to someone you knew well? Why?

c. Have you had an experience when you wanted or needed to say "No" but didn't? What happened? How did you feel?



Activity 35
What is Courage?

Trait:

Bravery

Students will understand that bravery encompasses small as well as great acts.

Time:

20 to 30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

One copy of the "Situations" for each student.

To Begin:

Ask your students to write their responses to each situation listed on their sheets. Tell them to write what they would really do in each situation.

Have them form small groups to discuss the consequences of each answer. For example, if a student said that he or she would get personally involved with a student threatening another with a weapon, what could happen as a result?

To End:

Discuss as a large group:

Why is it sometimes braver to let someone else handle a situation?

What situations might be appropriate for students your age to be involved in?

Situations

1. If I heard one student threatening another, I would probably _____
_____.

2. If I came upon a fight on the playground, I would probably _____
_____.

3. If I saw a student threaten another student with a weapon, I would probably _____
_____.

4. If I heard one student tease another about his or her race, I would probably _____
_____.

5. If I saw a student grab another student's hat and run off with it, I would probably _____
_____.

Understanding and Reflection

Purpose:

To summarize and evaluate the skills the students learned in this section.

Materials:

A piece of paper and pencil for each student.

Procedure:

Have your students write how they feel about their level of understanding of the character traits in this section.

Have them include some ideas from their practice experiences.

6

CHILDREN should learn to be:
considerate, caring, friendly, compassionate...

88

Activity 36
Too Close for Comfort

Trait:

Consideration

This activity helps students experience consideration for another person's personal space.

Time:

10 minutes

Number of People:

Unlimited

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Give your students the following instructions:

Find a partner.

Stand in the center of the room, away from the furniture, facing your partner.

Keep in eye contact with your partner.

Remain standing in the center of the room while your partner backs up to the wall.

Remain standing in the center while your partner, keeping eye contact, walks slowly toward you as close as possible.

Reverse roles with your partner.

To End:

Discuss the following questions with the class:

a. What feelings did you have as your partner moved closer and closer?

b. Was there a time when you wanted to say, "Close enough!"

c. Did you want to put your hand up to stop that person?

d. Did you want to back up at some point because your partner was too close?

Note:

Explain that the discomfort students felt was a signal that their partners had invaded their personal space or had come too close to their space.

Why does a considerate person honor another person's personal space?

Activity 37
Sort of Scrabble

Trait:

Caring

Time:

15 to 30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Post-it notes

To Begin:

Ask the class to brainstorm the characteristics of a caring person. List their ideas on the board.

Divide the class into small groups and distribute three post-it notes to each student in every group.

Instruct them to write one letter on each piece of paper—two should be consonants and one should be a vowel. Wait until everyone has completed their writing.

Tell the groups to form words with the letters, scrabble style, that relate to the concept of caring. They can be as creative as they like relating the words, but they will have to explain if any other group challenges them. For example: the students may form the word "dog" and talk about how pets and people show caring for each other.

Call time at the end of 8 minutes and have the groups call out the words they made.

Other groups may question why the words relate to caring.

If you wish, tell your students that the group that forms the most words will be the winner.

To End:

Ask your students what they learned about different kinds of caring from this activity.

Activity 38
Thinking of You

Trait:

Caring

Time:

30 to 45 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Construction paper, scissors, glue, markers

To Begin:

Explain to your students that one way people show caring is by sending cards.

Ask them on what occasions people send or receive cards.

Note: If you are doing this activity around a generic holiday like Valentine's Day, you can have them make valentines to give to friends or family.

Tell your students to think of someone who is sick, who is far away, or is having a birthday.

Instruct them to design a card and write a caring message on the card.

Ask for volunteers to share their cards with the class.

To End:

Discuss:

a. How does sending a card show caring?

b. How did you feel making a card for someone?

c. How did it feel when you received a card from someone? Discuss the occasion.

Activity 39
Smile

Trait:

Friendliness

Time:

30 to 45 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Drawing paper, marker, pencils

To Begin:

Ask your students to draw the outline of a large human figure on their papers.

Note: You may want to draw one on the board as an example.

Tell them to give the figure a mouth, nose, eyes and ears.

Instruct your students to write how people show friendliness with different parts of their bodies. For example, they smile at others with their mouths.

Ask them what other ways they show friendliness with their mouths. Tell them to write these ways near the mouths of the figures.

Note: You may want to demonstrate this on the board figure.

Examples: mouths say nice things; feet go places with you; eyes look at where you are talking; and hands do nice deeds for you.

Tell your students to follow this same process with eyes, ears, hands, arms, and any other parts of the body they want to include. They may dress the figures in whatever way they choose.

Ask for volunteers to share their figures with the rest of the class.

To End:

Discuss:

a. Why it is easier to be with a friendly person?

b. How do friendly people make you feel good?

Practicing Friendliness

Purpose:

To practice the trait of being friendly

AT HOME:

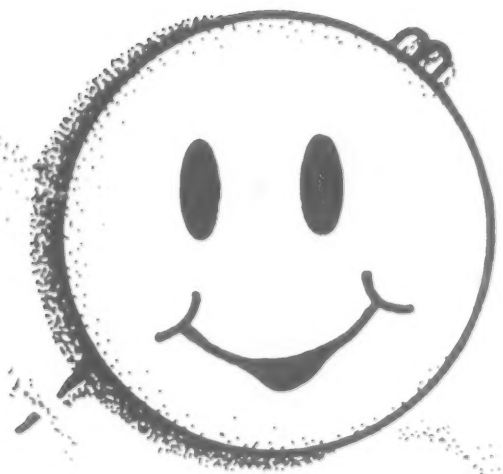
Speak to someone in the neighborhood you don't know well.

AT SCHOOL:

Smile at people. Say, "Hi!"

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Say hello to children who are younger than you.



94

Activity 40
Samuel's Walk

Trait:

Compassion

Time:

20 to 30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

A copy of the story "Samuel's Walk" for each student.

To Begin:

1. Distribute copies of "Samuel's Walk," one to each student.
2. Instruct your students to read the story and underline the actions that show compassion for others.
3. Ask for volunteers to read the actions in the story that they underlined.
4. Ask them why the actions showed compassion.

To End:

Discuss:

a. What other ways can we show compassion for others?

b. What compassionate acts have you seen on television?

Samuel's Walk

Samuel decided to walk home from school one day, instead of taking the bus. First he called his Mom to be sure it was okay and, then, off he went.

He started down Elm Street, which was lined with pretty houses and lots of big shady trees. Kim, a girl from school, was walking toward a pretty white house carrying a small dog.

"Hi, Kim," said Samuel. "Is that your dog?"

"No," said Kim, I found him here by the road. He's hurt. I'm taking him into my house and calling the phone number on his collar. I'm sure his owners are wondering what happened to him." Kim went into the house and Samuel walked on.

When he came to Main Street, he had to wait for the light to change so he could cross. Just as the light changed, he noticed a very old woman with a cane, trying her best to step down off the curb.

"Can I help you?" asked Samuel.

"Thank you," the woman said, smiling at Samuel. She took his arm and they walked slowly across the street.

As he continued his walk toward home, Samuel noticed a group of boys playing basketball in a small park. One of the boys was in a wheelchair, but he was getting his turn with the ball, and was shooting baskets right along with the others. "Nice play," yelled one of the boys when the boy in the wheelchair made a basket.

Just then Samuel heard crying. A little girl was sitting on the ground at the edge of the park, holding a broken airplane.

"Oh," said Samuel, "what happened?"

"It crashed," the little girl sobbed. "It's all broken."

"That's really too bad," said Samuel. "I'd be sad too, if my plane got broken."

"You would?" asked the little girl.

Samuel nodded and walked on. He was almost home.

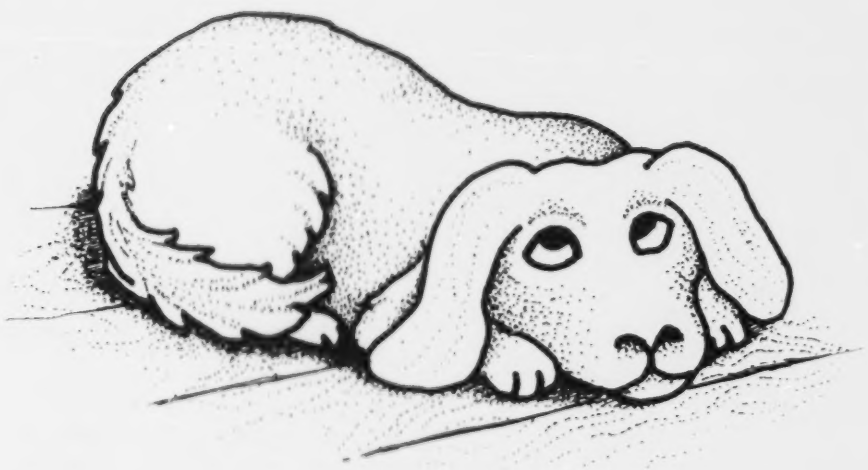
His neighbor had a tall ladder out and was leaning it against a tree.

"What are you doing?" asked Samuel.

"Look," said his neighbor. "A baby bird fell out of it's nest. I'm putting it back."

"Wow," said Samuel. "You saved its life."

The neighbor smiled and waved as Samuel headed for home.



97

Understanding and Reflection

Purpose:

To summarize and evaluate the skills the students learned in this section.

Materials:

A piece of paper and pencil for each student.

Procedure:

Have your students write how they feel about their level of understanding of the character traits in this section.

Have them include some ideas from their practice experiences.

98

7

CHILDREN should be...
well mannered, thrifty, neat, clean, respectful...

99

Activity 41
Polite Conversation

Trait:

Well mannered

Time:

15 to 25 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

White dinner-sized paper plates, sticks or tongue depressors, markers or crayons

To Begin:

Discuss as a class the things people say to each other that show good manners. For example, "Excuse me. I didn't mean to bump into you." "Please pass the salt."

List these phrases on newsprint or the board.

Pass out materials to each student and instruct them to decorate their plates with the face of a person. The stick should be glued to the back to make a hand held puppet.

Instruct your students to find partners. Tell them to hold the face plates in front of their faces and practice the phrases listed on the newsprint.

The students should change partners one or more times during this activity.

To End:

Discuss as a group:

a. Why is it important to use good manners when speaking to strangers?

b. Why is it important to use good manners when speaking to friends and family?

c. How do you feel when someone speaks to you rudely? For example, "Get outta my way!"

d. How do you feel if someone doesn't speak to you at all when you pass by them? Is that showing good manners?

Activity 42
Bumbling Boris

Trait:

Well-mannered

Students will understand the difference between good and bad manners.

Time:

30 to 45 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Copies of "The Story of Bumbling Boris," paper, pencil

To Begin:

Distribute copies of "The Bumbling Boris story" or read it aloud.

To End:

Ask your students why Bumbling Boris probably won't be invited back. They should identify the bad manners depicted in the story.

List your students' answers on the board.

Ask them why the actions they listed are considered bad manners.

Tell them to rewrite the story so that Bumbling Boris will be invited back to cousin Sally's parties.

The Story of Bumbling Boris

An Invitation

You are invited to a party!

Where: Cousin Sally's house

When: Saturday

Time: 2:00 - 4:00

Dress: Party clothes

It was Saturday and Bumbling Boris was outside cleaning his bike when he remembered Cousin Sally's party. It was only one o'clock and the party didn't start until two, but he decided to go over anyway. Maybe he could get something to eat before all the other people showed up.

So Bumbling Boris propped his bike against the house and walked over to his cousin's house. He brushed at the grease on his tee shirt and shorts as he walked. Good thing it was a hot day because he had forgotten to put on his shoes.

Needless to say, Sally was very surprised to see him. But she invited Boris in and told him he could wait for the rest of the guests in the living room.

Boris got bored, so he started looking around, opening the drawers of a big desk and looking in a pocketbook that was sitting next to the chair. Then he wandered into the kitchen and found a big, beautiful plate of little sandwiches. He stuffed as many as he could in his mouth. Then Boris heard voices in the living room. "Hey Sally!" he yelled at the top of his voice, "what's to drink with these sandwiches?"

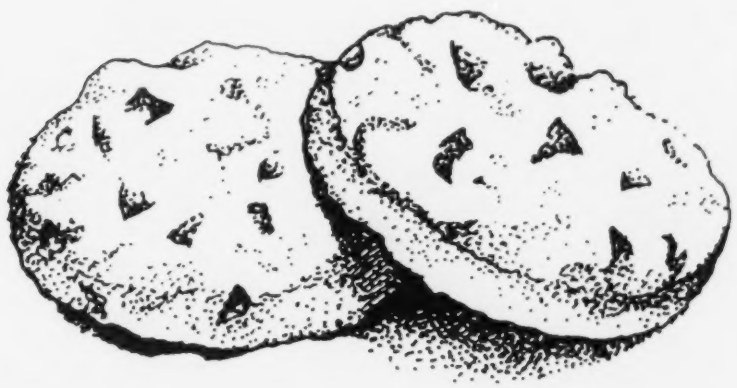
After the party started people formed a line for the food table. Boris realized he would be almost at the end of the line if he waited his turn, so he pushed up to the front and ended up third in line in front of 13 people.

He filled his plate with piles and piles of food. He didn't take any of the salad though; Boris hated salad. "Oh, yuk! Gross!" said Boris when he saw the salad on the party table.

When he came to the cookie tray, he took all but two cookies. Then Boris ate and ate and ate. But he could not eat even half of the food he had on his plate.

Then it was game time and Boris made a big fuss about being first. When he was supposed to walk quietly around the room to try to find a clue, Boris ran, bumping into furniture and people. When Boris won a game he yelled, "I won," at the top of his voice. When he lost he called the person who won a cheater.

When the party was over Boris left, yelling 'bye' over his shoulder. Cousin Sally just shook her head. "Never again," she thought to herself, "Never again."



Activity 43
Save or Spend?

Trait:

Thriftiness

To demonstrate that being thrifty can be rewarding

Time:

30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Play money, budget sheet or plain paper

To Begin:

Distribute $5.00 in play money and a budget sheet to each student. Tell your students to imagine that they get this amount of money each week for an allowance. Tell them to write something on the top of their sheets that they would like to buy that costs up to $20.00. Put in the cost of the item.

Teacher Tip:

You can extend this activity over several weeks, actually giving students $5.00 in play money each week.

Instruct your students to write the $5.00 in the right hand column of their budget sheets. To the left of the $5.00 they should write allowance.

Explain that there are some expenses that must come out of the $5.00 allowance.

a. First they must put $1.00 in savings every week for college. Tell students to write $1.00 under the $5.00 amount. Have them write the word savings to the left of $1.00. They should then subtract the $1.00 from the $5.00 and write the answer in the right hand column.

b. They spend another $1.00 on snacks each week. Tell students to put another $1.00 in the right-hand column and write snacks. They should then subtract another $1.00 from the amount of allowance they have left and write the answer in the column.

c. The $3.00 they have left can be spent or saved.

You may want to demonstrate filling out the budget sheet on the board.

Read the following scenarios or write them on the board and tell them to imagine these things happening to them during the week. If they choose to do any of them, the amounts must be subtracted from their budget sheets.

1. You are with your friend at the mall. You are very hungry and want to buy an ice cream cone. The cone costs $.75. What will you do?
2. School flags are for sale for $2.00. The friends you are with each buy one. What will you do?
3. You love comic books. The new ones come out this week. There are four you really want. Each one costs $2.00. What will you do?
4. It is your Mother's birthday this coming Saturday. What will you do?
5. The item you want to buy is going on sale in three weeks. You can buy it for $5.00 less than before. What will you do?
6. Everyone at school is wearing big buttons with sayings on them and you don't have one. They cost $2.50. What will you do?

To End:

a. Report out at the end of each week how the individual students have spent their money.

b. Figure out how long it will take each student to save enough money for his or her item.

c. Discuss:

What are the rewards of being thrifty?

How hard was it to pass up small items along the way to save for a big item?

Budget Sheet

Something I really want to buy _____

Allowance	_____	$5.00
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	

Activity 44
Spending Spree

Trait:

Thriftiness

Students will understand how their families manage money.

Time:

30 minutes of class time

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Write the following note and copy for students to take home.

Dear Parents,

We are talking about the character trait, thriftiness, in class. Helping your child understand the family budget is a way of helping him or her understand the value of thriftiness. You may not want to tell your child exact figures, but rather explain the expenditures the family has each month and why some purchases (toys and clothing) must be limited.

Distribute these notes to your students early in the week. Tell them that they will write a short paragraph in class at the end of the week describing what they learned about being thrifty.

When your students have completed their paragraphs, ask for volunteers to share what they learned about thriftiness.

To End:

a. Ask your students why they can't have everything they want right away.

b. How is saving money a little at a time being thrifty?

c. What are some ways your family exhibits thriftiness?

d. What are some examples of household expenses?

Activity 45
What a Mess

Trait:

Neatness

Time:

20 to 30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

Pencil and paper

To Begin:

Read the story of Andre aloud, or copy for the students to read individually.

Ask your students what they suppose are the consequences of Andre's bad habit. Tell them to write a paragraph describing what might happen to Andre as a result of his messiness.

For example,

a. What might happen to Andre's mouse?

b. What about the garbage that is in the closet?

c. What will he do if his basketball team has a game or if someone invites him to play basketball?

d. What if his friend needs his tent back for a camping trip?

Tell your students to write an ending paragraph to this story describing what Andre can do to improve his situation. They should be very specific.

To End:

Ask for volunteers to share the consequences of Andre's messiness.

Ask for volunteers to talk about what Andre can do to improve his situation.

Ask your students what they do at home to keep their room, toys, and clothes neat.

Andre

Andre had a bad habit...

He threw toys, clothes, shoes and even half-eaten sandwiches in the closet and closed the door. When his mother left him some clean clothes, he threw those in there too, instead of putting them in his dresser drawers. If he borrowed a toy from his brother, he threw it in the closet instead of returning it. Andre kept stuffing—birthday presents, even the old wrapping, homework papers, banana peels, books, the dog's blanket, towels, a tent his friend loaned him, shells he found at the beach, his mouse cage with his little mouse inside, a basket ball, some candy left over from Halloween, a collection of miniature horses his grandfather gave him, an umbrella, a bag of cheese doodles, three pairs of boots that were too small, some rocks he had found one day at the state park, a tire from someone's bike, a poster he had made at school, some flowers he bought his mom for Mother's Day and forgot about and his basketball uniform. After a while, Andre couldn't get into his closet and began stuffing things under his bed. Andre couldn't find anything.

Activity 46
The Story of Lucy McCrory

Trait:

Cleanliness

To help children understand the need for personal cleanliness

Time:

30 to 40 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

A copy of the poem for each student, paper, crayons, or markers

To Begin:

Distribute a copy of the poem and drawing materials to each student.

Read the poem aloud as your students read along silently.

Instruct them to draw a picture of Lucy dirty, and one of her clean and ready for school.

Ask for volunteers to share their pictures.

To End:

Discuss as a group

a. What are some of the health reasons to be clean?

b. What are some other reasons to be clean?

c. Why don't people want to be your friend if you are not clean?

The Story of Lucy McCory

This is the story of Lucy McCrory
The dirtiest girl in the land.
She refused to be clean and made a big scene
If water came near to her hand.
She thought soap was a waste
and the same with toothpaste
And always she wore the same shirt.
She smelled very bad and folks thought it was sad
they could not see her at all for the dirt.

Her father had sighed and her mother had cried
and doctors had studied her case
But no one knew quite what they could do
To get Lucy to JUST WASH HER FACE.

Then the school said we're sorry but Lucy McCrory
cannot step a foot through our doors.
She may be germy and possibly wormy,
have measles or big gooey sores.
How do we know if her skin doesn't show
Whether she's sick or she's well?
And we have a rule that children in school
Absolutely for sure cannot smell.

So they sent her away on that very same day
and Lucy McCrory went home.
She got in the tub and rub a dub dub..
made a happy ending for this poem.

Activity 47
What is Respect?

Trait:

Respect

Time:

20 to 30 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

A copy of the work sheet for each student.

To Begin:

Distribute the work sheets to each student. Tell them to read the questions and circle the answers they believe are correct. There can be more than one answer.

When your students have completed their work sheets, go over each question with the class.

If they disagree on an answer, ask for two students with different answers to explain why they chose that answer. Try to bring the class to consensus on the answers.

To End:

a. Ask your students how they show respect to:

—their parents

—their teachers

—their friends

b. Ask your students how they would like others to show respect to them.

Respect Work Sheet

1. Tanya throws a napkin out of the window of the school bus.

   Is this disrespectful? Yes No

   If yes, to whom is it disrespectful?

   a. the law

   b. no one

   c. the people who live near where she threw the napkin

   d. the environment

   e. other students on the bus

2. A speaker is talking about potatoes. He is speaking to a group of potato farmers about how to get rid of potato bugs. Johanna and Sam know all about potato bugs, so they talk between themselves during the speech.

   Is this disrespectful? Yes No

   If yes, to whom is it disrespectful?

   a. Johanna

   b. the potato farmers who are listening

   c. the speaker

   d. Sam

   e. no one

3. The teacher asks Michael in a quiet voice to please sit down and do his work. In a loud, angry voice Michael says, "You can't tell me what to do!"

   Is this disrespectful? Yes No

   If yes, to whom is it disrespectful?

   a. the other students in the class

   b. Michael

   c. no one

   d. the teacher

4. Mary rides the city bus to get to her father's house. At her stop she pushes an old lady out of the way so she can get off first.

   Is this disrespectful? Yes No

   If yes, to whom is it disrespectful?

   a bus driver

   b. Mary

   c. old lady

   d. other passengers

   e. no one

5. James' mother tells him he cannot go to the mall alone. James says, "You are so stupid. Everyone's mother lets them go."

   Is this disrespectful? Yes No

   If yes, to whom is it disrespectful?

   a. no one

   b. James' mother

   c. everyone else's mother

   d. the next door neighbor

6. A very old man hobbles into the doctor's office. There are no chairs in the waiting room, so Robin stands up and offers him her seat.

   Is this disrespectful? Yes No

   Is this respectful? Yes No

   Who does it show respect for?

   a. Robin

   b. no one

   c. old man

   d. doctor

Activity 48
Different and the Same

Trait:

Respect

Students will understand the concept of respecting differences

Time:

15 minutes

Materials/Preparation:

None

To Begin:

Tell the class you will be reading statements. When they agree with a statement, they should stand up. Once they are standing, they should remain standing until they hear a statement with which they do not agree. At this time they should sit down.

Practice by reading the first statement. Tell your students to look around to see who is in agreement with them and who is not.

Continue to read the statements, noting the differences in student responses.

To End:

Ask your students the following:

a. What surprised you during this activity?

b. Were you surprised that so many people liked or disliked different things?

c. Are people who like or dislike something different than you wrong or just different?

d. Is different bad? Why or why not?

e. What does it mean to respect peoples' differences?

Statement List

1. I would like to be the President of the United States.
2. Orange is one of my favorite colors.
3. I have brown eyes.
4. Pizza is my favorite food.
5. I would rather watch television than play outside.
6. My best subject in school is math.
7. Of all the ice cream flavors, vanilla is the best.
8. I would like to learn karate.
9. My family doesn't eat meat.
10. Broccoli is my favorite vegetable.

116

Understanding and Reflection

Purpose:

To summarize and evaluate the skills you learned in this section.

Materials:

A piece of paper and pencil for each student.

Procedure:

Have your students write how they feel about their level of understanding about the character traits in this section.

Have them include some ideas from their practice experience.

8

Culminating Activities

Activity 49
Building Character

Trait:

This is the culminating activity of a character education unit or for the end of a year's study of character education.

Time:

Two weeks

Materials/Preparation:

Roll of brown paper (at least three feet wide and enough six foot lengths for each team of two).

To Begin:

Instruct your students to pair up with a partner. The teacher should partner with someone only if there is an uneven number of group members.

Distribute sheets of brown paper and markers to each pair and instruct them to trace one partner's outline. They will need to find open floor space and lay down on the paper for it to work best.

Assign one of the character traits from this book to each pair.

The partners will decorate their figure with all of the information they learned about their assigned trait. For example: caring can be a boy or girl with a big smile and a card in their hand. There can be words written on the figure also.

By the end of the week, all the figures should be taped around the room. Each day of the second week several of the traits will be explained to the whole class.

On the last day, the class can celebrate and practice all their new learning with refreshments.

To End:

Have the class give themselves a big round of applause for their efforts.

Activity 50
Family Values

Trait:

Any and all

Time:

30 minutes class time

Materials/Preparation:

A copy of the "Interview Form" for each student

To Begin:

Distribute the "Interview Form," one for each adult in a student's family. Explain to your students that every family has certain character traits they value more than others. For example, one family may value industriousness while another family values friendliness.

Instruct them to interview the adults in their families to find out what character traits are most important to them. Be sure they get examples of how their families demonstrate the importance of these traits. For example, in a family where hard work or industriousness is valued, everyone in the family is expected to do work in the house or yard on weekends.

After the students return to class, ask for volunteers to share what they found with the rest of the class.

To End:

Discuss:

a. Is one value more important than another? Why or why not?

b. Can values be different but not wrong?

Interview Form

1. What do you believe are the most important character traits? _____

2. Why did you choose these traits?

3. How does our family show that we value these traits?

Character Education: 25 Suggestions for Parents

The development of good character in children requires the efforts of both home and school, as well as those of community resources, such as religious and civic organizations. In an age when youth are increasingly influenced by the media and their peers, it is critically important that parents take an especially strong role in their children's moral development.

1. **Be authentic. Model good character in the home.**

   Parents, who refuse to cheat on income tax returns or take unfair advantage of their neighbors will have greater credibility when they discuss responsible citizenship or fairness with their children.

2. **Make clear statements about your values and beliefs to your children.**

   Let them know where you stand on important issues. Be sure they understand the principles or the "why" behind your beliefs.

3. **Show respect for your spouse, your children, and other family members.**

   Teach your children to treat others with courtesy and respect, to practice sensitivity and empathy.

4. **Model and teach your children good manners and insist that all family members use good manners (please, thank you, etc.)**

5. **Demonstrate and encourage healthy ways to resolve conflict both inside and outside your home.**

6. **Have family meals together (without television) as often as possible.**

   Even if the meal is a takeout order of fast food, try to sit down as a family to eat it. Use this as an opportunity to talk with your children and to listen to their concerns.

7. **Plan as many family activities as possible.**

   Be sure to involve your children in the planning. Let them know that you value their recommendations. Have fun together!

8. **Model appropriate behavior regarding alcohol and drugs.**

   Do not provide access to drugs or alcohol to your children.

9. **Worship together as a family.**

   Recent studies verify that youth who have strong religious convictions are less likely to drop out of school or engage in delinquent behavior.

10. **Plan family service projects or civic activities.**

    Sample projects include volunteering at a shelter or soup kitchen, mowing the lawn for an elderly neighbor, taking a meal to a new neighbor, or working together on an environmental concern.

11. **Read to your children and keep good literature in the home.**

    Much literature contains a rich source of material for character development.

12. **Limit your children's spending money.**

    Help them to develop an appreciation for nonmaterial rewards. Provide opportunities for them to work and to earn those things they desire.

13. **Discuss the holidays and their history.**

    Use these opportunities to help your children appreciate the great figures in history and their contributions to our lives. Have family celebrations and establish family traditions.

14. **Share your heroes with your children.**

    Explain why you admire certain people and the specific character traits they possess.

15. **Use situations that occur (an incident at school, a television news report, a movie) to spark family discussions on important issues.**

    Capitalize on the "teachable moment."

16. **Allow your children to solve their own day-to-day problems.**

    Discuss options and offer encouragement but avoid "taking over" unless it is necessary.

17. **Assign home responsibilities (taking out the trash, washing dishes) for all family members.**

    Even very young children can be responsible for simple tasks. As children mature, allow them to experience more and more opportunities to be responsible.

18. **Set clear expectations for your children and consistently hold them accountable for their actions.**

    Make sure they know the rules and consequences. When they break the rules, be sure they experience appropriate consequences.

19. **Look for opportunities to reward wise decisions and desirable behavior, rather than focusing on the negative.**

20. **Provide positive activities (sports, hobbies, music lessons, service projects, scouts) and adequate supervision for your child.**

    (Much of the substance abuse and inappropriate sexual behavior of adolescents occurs in homes when parents are away.)

21. **Learn to say no and mean it.**

    Despite the child's protests, a parent's most loving act is often to stand firm and prohibit the child's participation in a potentially hurtful activity.

22. **Refuse to cover for your children or make excuses for their inappropriate behavior.**

    For example, if your child skips class, let him/her suffer the consequences. Lying for the child sends a very powerful message about the parents' values.

23. **Know where your children are, whom they are with, and what they are doing.**

    At the risk of being accused of being "old-fashioned", insist on meeting their friends and their parents.

24. **Pay attention to the television show, videos, and movies that your children are watching.**

    While there are some very fine materials available, there is also much harmful material easily accessible to our youth. If you learn that your child has viewed something you find objectionable, candidly share your feelings and discuss why the material offends your values.

25. **Remember that you are the adult.**

    Children don't need another buddy, but they desperately need a parent who cares enough to set and enforce appropriate limits for their behavior.

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Character Education Activities for K-6 Classrooms

by Sandra Peyser
and Miriam McLaughlin

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127